

# MECHANICAL MEMORIES MAGAZINE

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ISSUE 65

APRIL 2012



*The only UK magazine dedicated to vintage coin-operated amusement machines*

# Mechanical Memories Magazine

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# Editorial

Hello, and here we are at last with the April issue. It's been a hectic few months for me, having had about a dozen machines to get up and running, plus tons of work to get done at the arcade, all to get ready for the Easter school holidays. Was it all worth it? Well, to be honest, I can't help feeling it's been a total waste of time – yes, once again I've had a crap Easter at Brighton. The last couple of years have been difficult, to say the least. The general economic climate has left punters, particularly families, with less money to spend on non-essentials like a day out at the seaside. Fewer people have been visiting, and those that do, are not spending. So the last thing I needed was a kick in the teeth from Brighton council.

As some of you may know, Brighton has a Green MP. What I didn't know until recently, is that these Green loonies have infiltrated the local council. In a bid to cut car usage and force people onto public transport, these planet-saving, vegetarian maniacs have hiked the seafront parking charge to £20 a day (no, that's not one of my typo errors – £20 a day). Brilliant! Now, if you had just paid an arm and a leg to fill the car with petrol to take your family for a day out at Brighton, what would you do when confronted with an invitation to splash out twenty quid just to park? Of course, you'd turn the car round and go somewhere else. And will these punters arrive by train next time? Of course not, they'll just drive somewhere else. As we progress through the season, the effect will snowball, so that come August, Brighton will be deserted.

Saving the planet matters, but so do people. When the miss-guided policies of these idealistic pricks effect people's livelihoods, I get angry. This isn't just about me and my little old penny arcade; thousands of traders and their employees earn a living on Brighton's sea front. As a result of the aforementioned economic situation, many of us were struggling anyway; this latest kick in the teeth could be the last straw for many. The sad part for me, is that there could well be an additional 50 – 100 lots in the Coventry auction this year. Thanks for nothing Brighton.

I know you all look forward to my moaning, and the good news is I have something else to moan about! But as I've run out of space, it will have to wait till next month.

*Jerry*

# Harold English

It is with sadness that I have to report that Harold English died on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, having endured a long and brave fight against cancer.

Harold was a genuine collector, with a genuine love and enthusiasm for our hobby. His passion was German wall machines, particularly electro-mechanicals, and his knowledge of these machines was almost certainly unrivalled. He was always happy to share his knowledge with others, and there are many collectors who have benefited from his assistance over the years. Harold was also a dealer, making frequent trips to Germany to replenish his stock. His machines were never cheap, but you get what you pay for – and a machine from Harold was always worth the money.

Harold was always very supportive of this magazine and the Coventry auctions. Even last year, although clearly not in good health, he didn't miss the auction, bringing friends with him to assist in carrying his machines. This coming November, Harold's absence will be felt by many.

Our condolences to his wife Chris and family.

*Jerry*



*Harold English*

# Dreamland

## MARGATE

### Save Dreamland Update April 2011

#### **Jimmy Godden**

The former owner of Dreamland Margate, Jimmy Godden, died on Tuesday 27 March 2012 aged 66 following a long battle with cancer. In addition to Dreamland, he also previously owned Dymchurch's MW's Amusement Park, Folkestone's Rotunda Amusement Park and Ramsgate's Pleasurama Amusement Park. He became a controversial figure after closing three of the parks for redevelopment; only MW's continues to operate, under new ownership.

His funeral was held on 11 April.

At the time of his death, Mr Godden did not have a controlling interest in Dreamland, being a 40% shareholder of Dreamland owner the Margate Town Centre Regeneration Company Ltd.

A decision on the recent Compulsory Purchase Inquiry is now expected June/July 2012, and should be unaffected by Jimmy Godden's death.

***Nick Laister*** (Chairman, The Dreamland Trust)

**Jan Leandro** (Audience Development Officer)

[www.dreamlandmargate.com](http://www.dreamlandmargate.com)  
[www.savedreamland.co.uk](http://www.savedreamland.co.uk)



# **The Herberts of Dorchester and their Steam**

**by Kay Townsend**

They started with horses, progressed to steam haulage and brought up sixteen children along the way! Jack Herbert, a well-respected showman, transported his rides and snake show, experiencing many extraordinary incidents which came with owning traction engines.

Any steam enthusiast will enjoy this delve into the past, so sit back and enjoy the stories from those who lived the life whilst travelling the fairgrounds.

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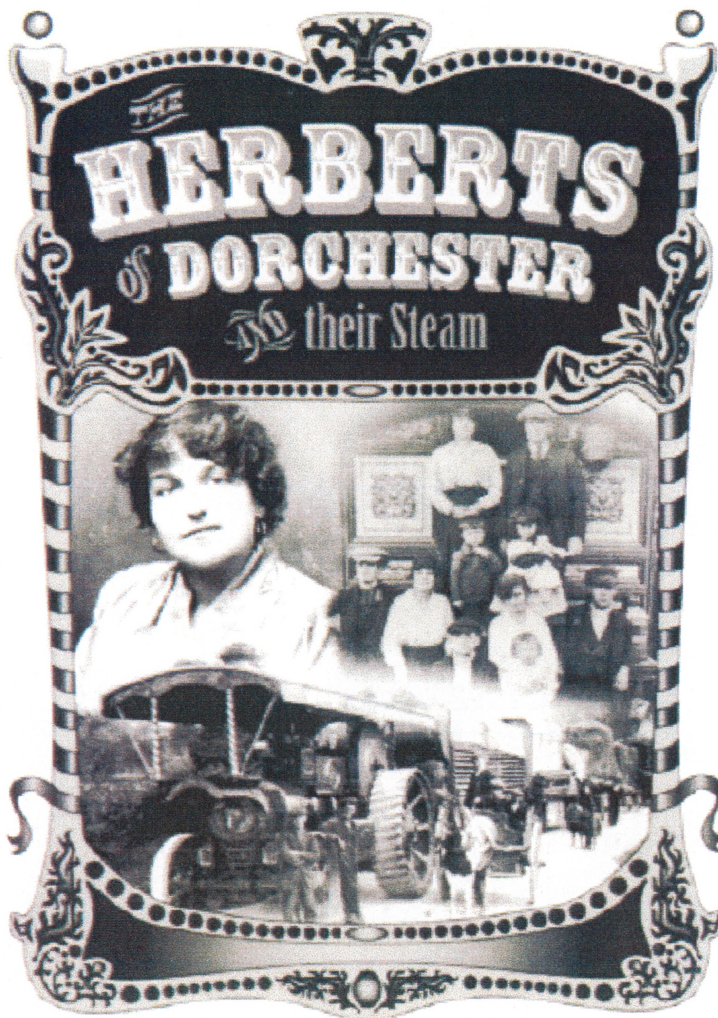
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**Publisher:** Kay Townsend

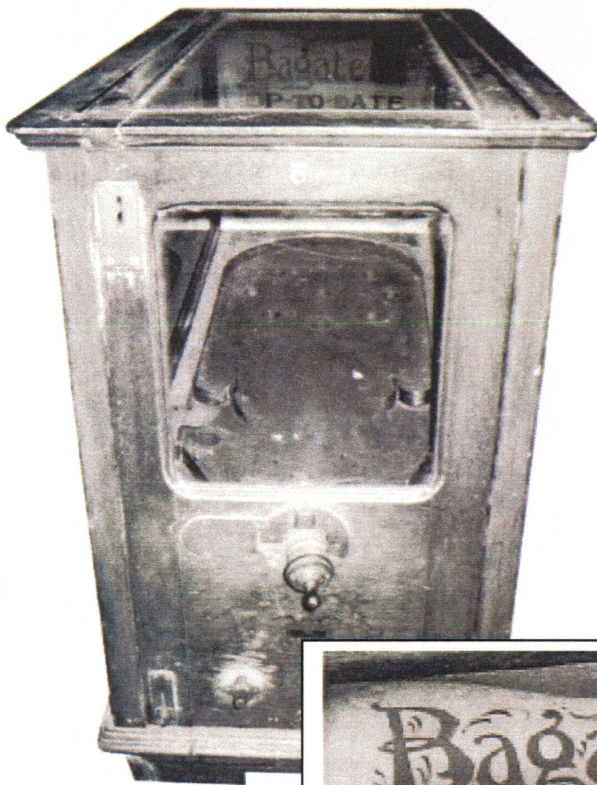
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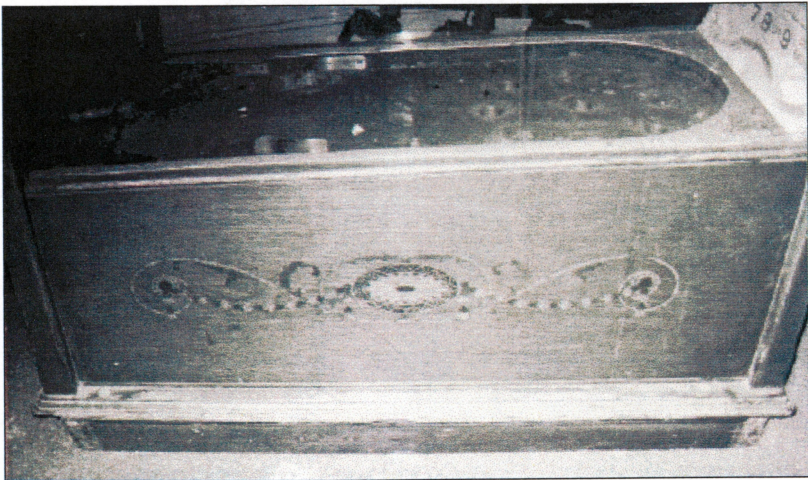


# The Up to Date Bagatelle

By Kevin Gowland

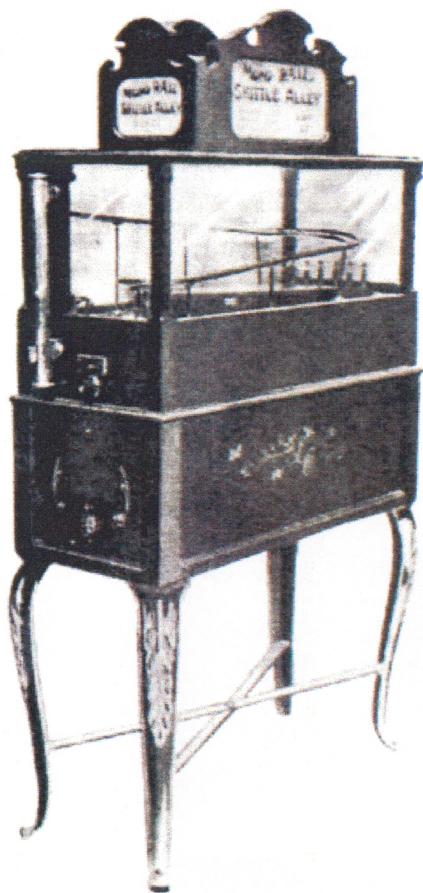
I recently came across this early pinball machine called the 'Up to Date'. It caught my curiosity as it was a machine that I had not seen before. It had a look to it that distinguished it from the plethora of 1930s style pinball machines with which we are all generally familiar. Whereas the 1930s pinball games tend to be housed in fairly squat cabinets with a single glass plate over the playfield, this game was housed in a tall, relatively elaborate cabinet (approx. 26" high, 17 ½" wide and 35" deep), with upright glass panels on all four sides.

The artwork at the back of the cabinet was noticeably 'old fashioned' and seemed to date the machine to one or two decades earlier than the 1930s. I recollected having seen something similar before, and I found at the lower left corner of page 132 of the Nic Costa 'Automatic Pleasures' book, a picture of the New Polython Supply Company 'Monorail Skittle Alley' machine. I compared the 'Up to date' against the Monorail Skittle Alley, and my thoughts were that the cabinet style was the same. Also, the 'Up to Date' had several water transfer decals very similar to those featured on the New Polython machine; and as far as I could tell, the respective cabinets seemed to be about the same size too.



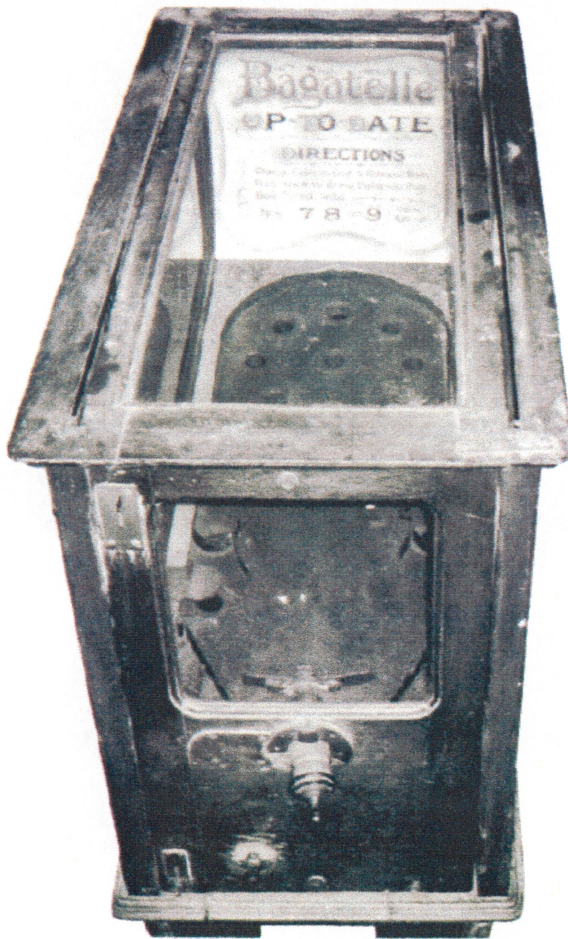
*An elaborate transfer on one of the side panels of the Up to Date bagatelle.*

The New Polython machine was dated at 1910, and I felt that this date would seem right for the 'Up to date' game; especially taking into account the artwork for that machine. It is apparent too that the 'Up to date' originally had a lower cashbox and I suspect was floor standing and sat on legs, on the lines of the Monorail machine. Having said all of this, I did speak with a fellow collector who suggested that the 'Up to date' machine might date from 1905, and have been manufactured by ELL. So, the question of manufacturer is certainly not decided, though I tend to lean towards the New Polython connection.

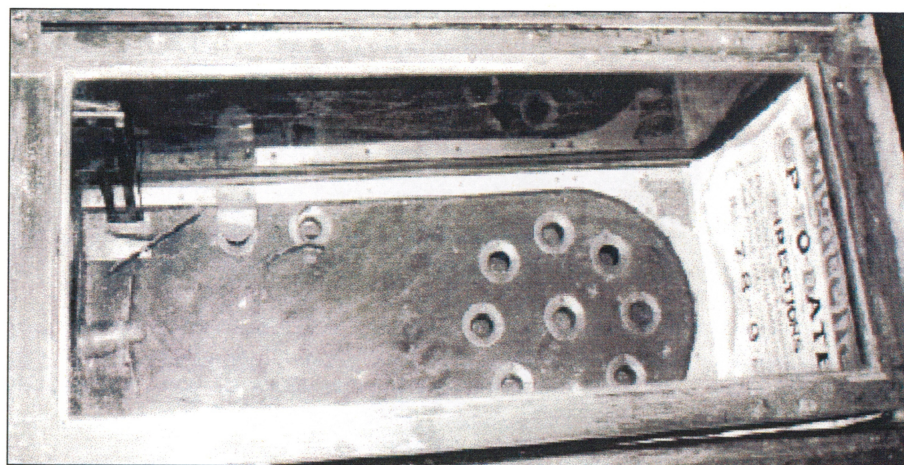
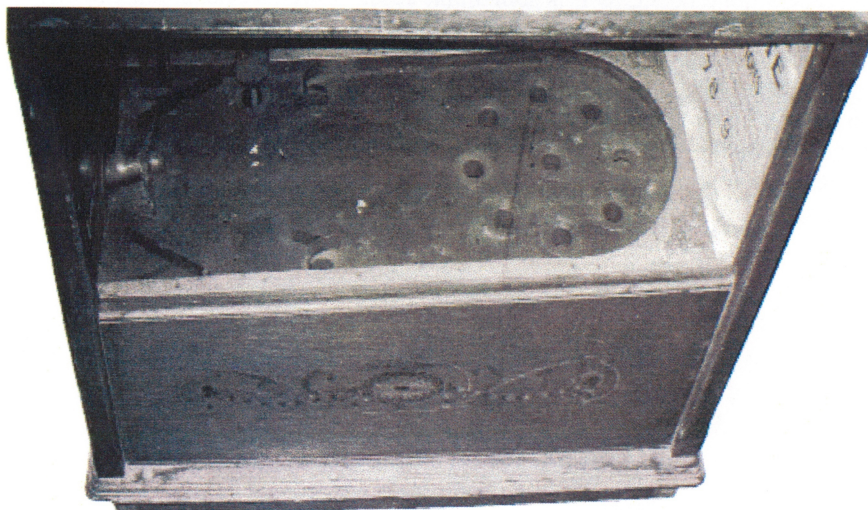


*The Monorail Skittle Alley, c.1910 by the New Polyphon Supply Co.  
See page 132 of Costa's book.*

An interesting feature of the 'Up to date' game is that it incorporates a coin return feature. This is quite novel, as it is something absent from practically all early 1930s pinball games. That being said, the 1930s pinball craze came out of America and, therefore, most pinball machines of this era are American manufactured machines. Obviously, the 'Up to date' is a British machine, and the very fact that we are talking about machines manufactured two decades apart on different continents means that there is no reason to expect that the coin return feature should have carried across. It is also the case that in America, in the early 1930s, the climate after prohibition probably meant that the very thought of adding a coin return feature was considered foolhardy.





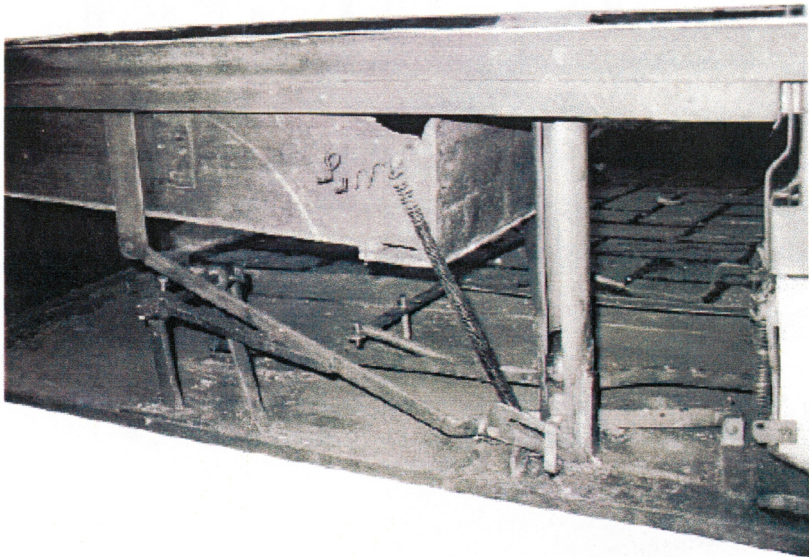


*Above, two views of the Up to Date Bagatelle playfield.  
Opposite, internal view showing the ball tube and ball feeder arm.*

The operation of the game is that the player deposits his 1d coin, which dislodges a rod inside the machine to allow the balls to roll down ready for play. There are three steel balls in the machine, but I question whether these are original to the machine. Therefore, I cannot be certain quite how many balls the machine is supposed to operate on. There is an external rod which the player pulls and this causes a ball to be presented up to the playfield for play. The mechanism for this is much the same as the ball feeder arm of a clown catcher. There are nine holes on the playfield, and the aim of the game is to fire a ball into holes 7,8, or 9 in order to receive your coin back. Only the deposited coin is held ready for return. So, if you are successful with the first ball, you would not be able to win a further coin with any subsequent balls. Unfortunately, the machine is stored a distance away at the moment and I can't recall what happens if a player doesn't win. Obviously, when a coin is deposited for a new game, either the previous coin is sent to the cashbox, or remains ready for payout and the new coin goes to the cashbox. My expectation is that it's the former.

If anyone can add more information regarding the machine, I am sure it would be welcomed.

***Kevin Gowland***

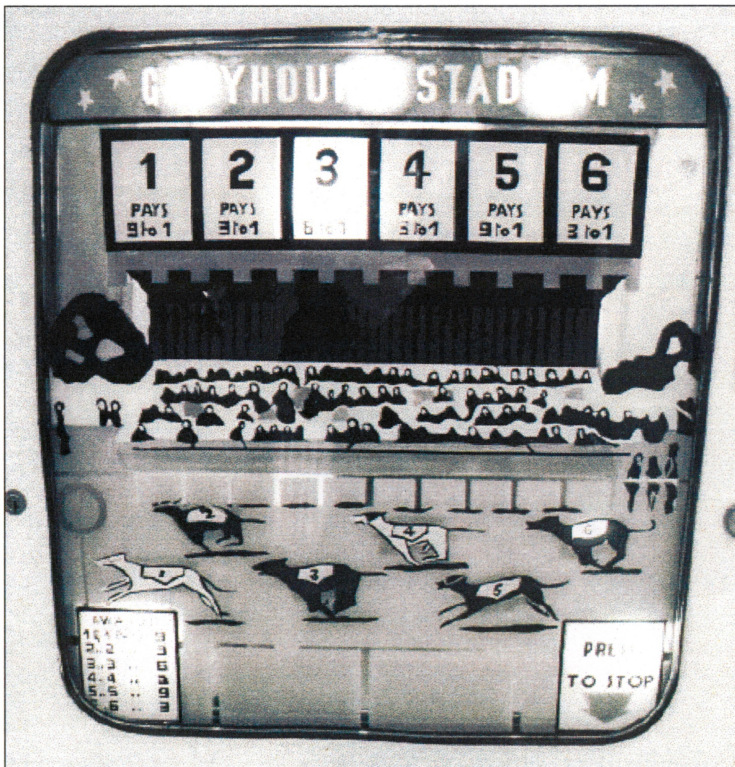




# Greyhound Stadium

By Robert Rowland

Just recently, I added to my collection a 1960s electro-mechanical wall machine called **Greyhound Stadium**, which I have been told was possibly made by Goldings, of Essex. Until acquiring my Greyhound Stadium, I had forgotten all about this machine, as it was back in the summer of 1969 that I last remember seeing one. It wasn't on my favourites list at the time, but upon seeing one again it really brought the memories flooding back. If I remember correctly, Greyhound Stadium used to sit just behind the Jigsaws on the back wall in Jackson's Marine Pastimes. As I've mentioned before, 'Marine' was my favourite arcade here in Mablethorpe back in the 1960s, as they always had the very latest up-to-date machines, as well as plenty of the older slots.



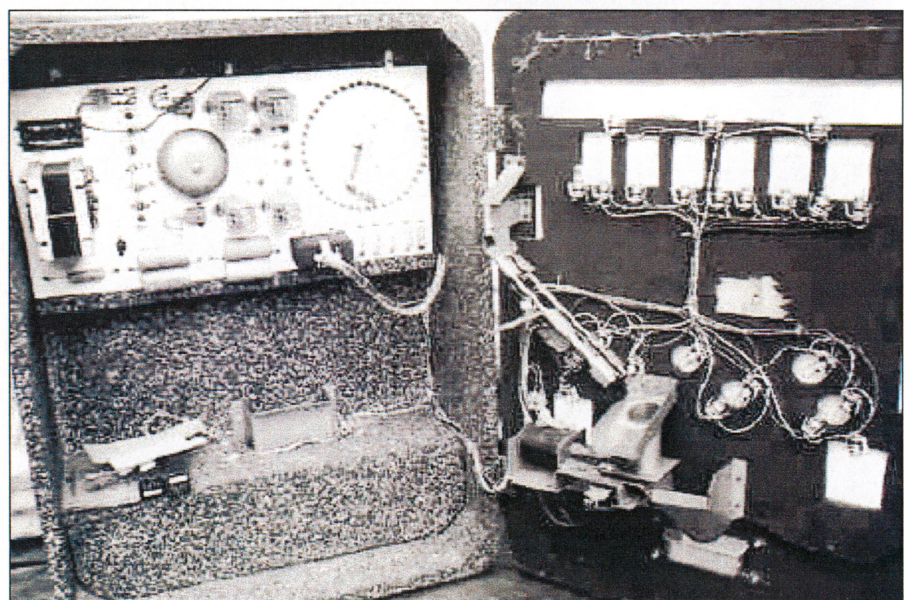
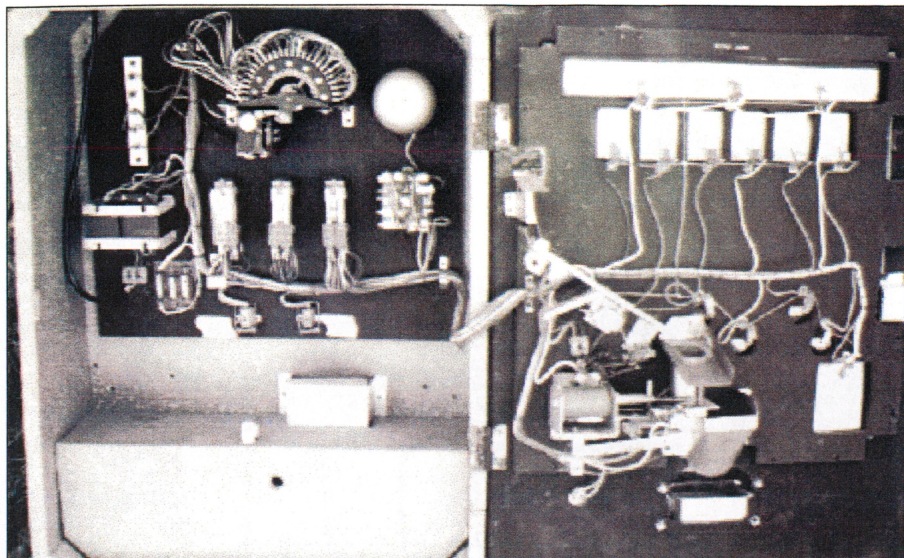


Returning to my Greyhound Stadium, the front glass displays a very nice scenic view of a dog track (greyhound stadium) with the old type wooden grandstand with crowds and punters. The main focus view shows the winning post as all six greyhounds approach the winning line at the finish of the race; the dogs being numbered in sequence 1 – 6. The top part of the scene displays the odds boards, 3 – 1, 6 – 1, 9 – 1. At the bottom left we see the winning awards card, then located at the bottom right we have the *press to stop* button, and finally the square chrome payout cup centrally located, making Greyhound Stadium a very nice eye-catching machine.



Left, Robert's new Greyhound Stadium.  
Above, another version of the same machine, with slightly different artwork  
and a dark wood-grained Formica finish to the door.





***Top,** Inside Robert's Greyhound Stadium.  
Note the single uniselector, located at the top centre of the case.*

***Bottom,** the second version of Greyhound Stadium.  
Rather than a uniselector, this has a custom rotary selector switch.*

On insertion of a coin, the six greyhounds and the six odds boards all flash. You can either press the stop button, or allow the machine to stop itself. If you let it stop itself, each play varies between three and eight seconds. The winning odds boards are: boards 1 and 5 pay 9d; board 3 pays 6d, and boards 2, 4 and 6 pay 3d – that's with the corresponding greyhound lighting up of course. So a win occurs when an odds board and dog with the same number remain lit at the end of play. Then a bell rings, the winnings are paid out, but then the machine jumps to a losing combination (a lot of these electro-mechanical machines seem to do this – maybe it was to deter punters from inserting a coin in a machine that had just paid out).

Greyhound Stadium is a fun game to play, as it is random – no system or sequence on this one! Most of this type of machine operated on a pre-set sequence (Electrodart, Roto-pool etc.) meaning it didn't matter when you released the button, the outcome was already decided by a second uniselector inside the machine. No so with Greyhound Stadium. On the insertion of a coin, the one uniselector inside rotates, and only when that uniselector stops is the outcome finalised for that particular play. So you could win every time, although this is most unlikely as the losing positions on the uniselector easily outweigh the winning ones.

Matching greyhound and odds boards 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 do match and pay out, but greyhound 5 and odds board 5 never come up together. Greyhound 5 will light up but only with a losing odds board. I don't know if greyhound 5 was wired up to ever come in with its corresponding odds board. Looking closely at the wiring on the uniselector inside the machine, it doesn't appear that any wiring has been changed, as all the solder joints look untouched. The fact that greyhound and odds board 1 also pay 9d, I think that two 9d wins on a random uniselector would prove over-generous, so it's likely that's the way it was. If any readers own a Greyhound Stadium, maybe they could let us know if both the 9d wins do come up. As I remember in the 1960s, mostly all of these similar electro-mechanical wall machines (Pools Perm etc.) only had one winning line paying 9d. The mystery of it all!

If you would like to see my Greyhound Stadium in action, get yourself onto Youtube and search 'Greyhound Stadium 1960s' – and you will be treated to a nice little clip of my machine.

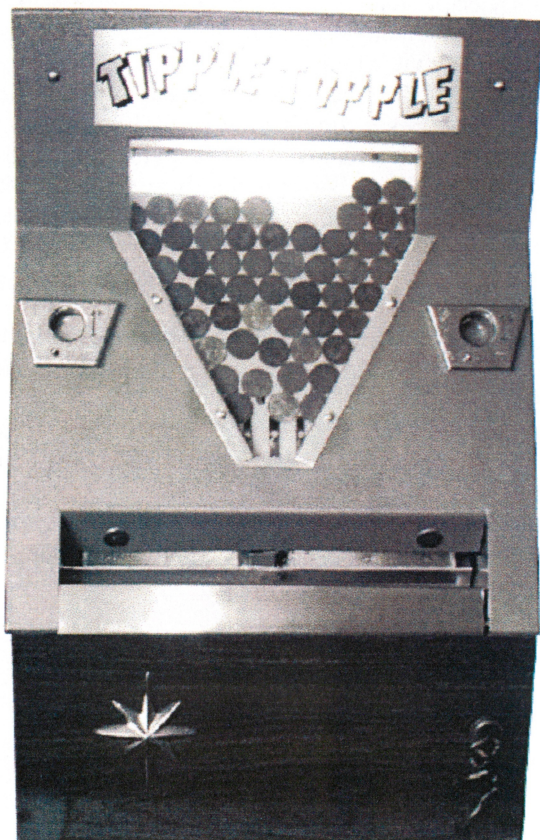
***Robert Rowland***



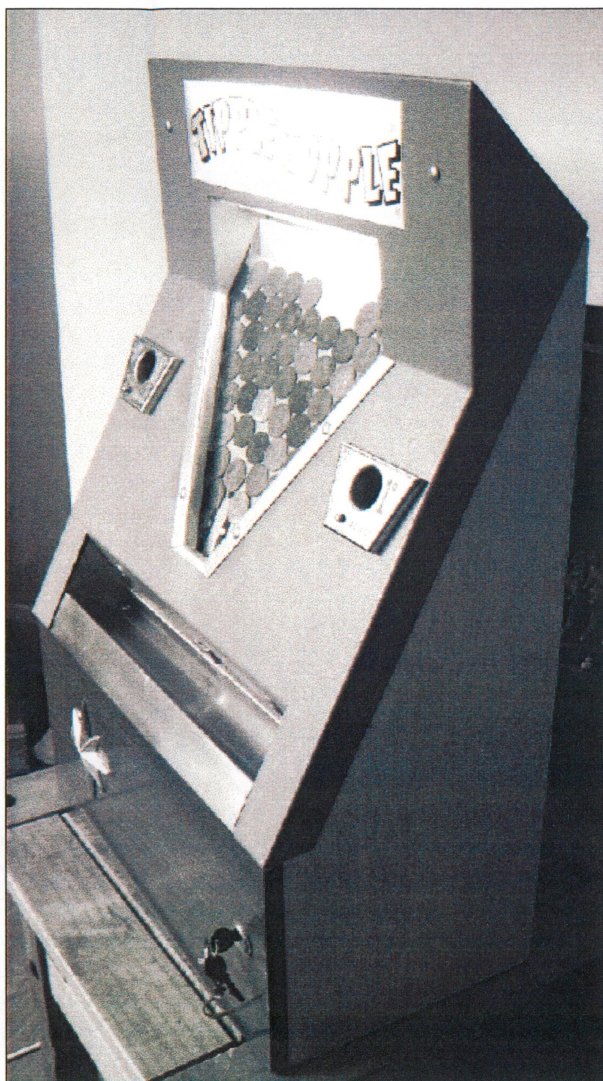
# Tipple-Topple

By Stuart Dale.

I thought that this month I would introduce you to a machine that I have just had the pleasure of working on, although sadly it does not make up part of my own collection – yet! I was contacted by a fellow collector friend of mine, who had just acquired this machine fresh from storage in the back room of an old arcade; the machine had sat there untouched *and unloved* for over 40 years.



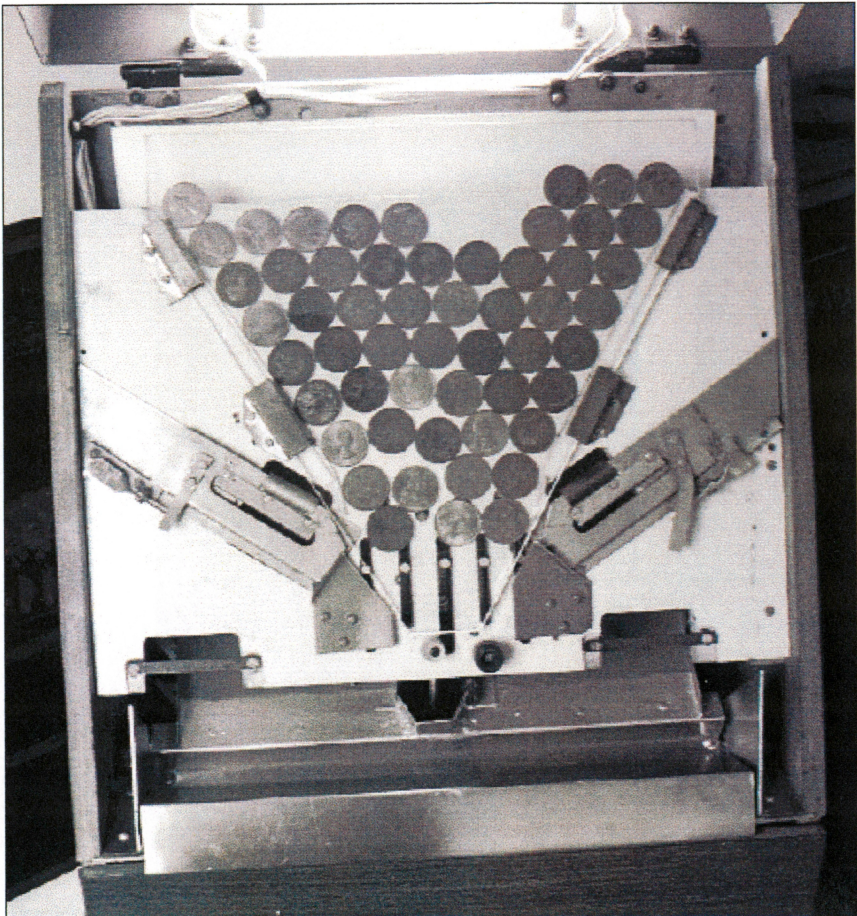
The machine is called **Tipple-Topple** and I believe it was made in the early 1960s by the *Amusement Equipment Company* of London. It is a well constructed machine with typical 60s Formica coverings to the sides and cash box door. The playfield door, which is hinged at the top and opens upwards, is fabricated from heavy gauge sheet steel and painted in a hard wearing crinkle finish. This is illuminated by two small strip lights behind the sign written glass top flash.





The mechanism is powered by a VERY strong Parvalux motor. I know this because it nipped the end of my finger and showed no signs of slowing down. Luckily, Mrs Dale was on hand to administer sweet tea and sympathy, so all was soon well with the world.

The game itself is a type of coin pusher, but differs from the normal run of the mill pushers by having a near vertical playfield. The pennies are fed into the machine from the slots at either side of the window and are pushed upwards by means of a row of five steel pins. These pins slowly and constantly move up and down in the lower area of the playfield, and any coins that get lifted by these pins are then suspended at the bottom of the playfield by a second set of spring loaded pins.





The coins are gradually pushed further and further up the playfield as new coins are fed in at the bottom. Some of the coins that make it to the top are returned to the player, and as you would expect some coins make their way into the cash box to help keep the arcade owner happy. The machine has a very, very large cash box, so I think the arcade owner would never have had any reason to be sad!

It looks as if this machine was designed to be wall mounted, as it is quite slim in depth. The only drawback with having it fixed to a wall is the fact that you won't be able to fully open the front door, due to the poisoning of the hinges should anything ever go wrong.

So there you have it.... **TIPPLE-TOPPLE**

*Stuart Dale*

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# Bryans Machines Anagrams

By Cyril Johnson

Can you find ten Bryans machines in the anagrams below?  
Answers next month.

1. CARNAL SQUEALER
2. RAPID MAY
3. WIT OF BLUR
4. NUDE LUMP
5. EVER RATE
6. DISHEARTEN RUDE
7. VIEW FUN
8. WELL COW VET NICK
9. PAWING
10. ELSE SEVEN

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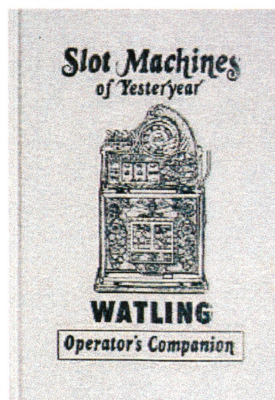
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